843 bokeka. The same is true if the pregnancy is the result of adultery;
837 the natural father must bear all the consequences of his act. The husband is absolved from them and has no relations with his wife until the end of this particular pregnancy. The culprit must give him a pledge by which he publically recognizes his responsibility, and he is expected to fulfill all the duties of a husband. Therefore he may have relations with the woman during her entire pregnancy without paying additional indemnities. If any accident befalls the mother or the child, he is made to pay a large indemnity.

Note finally that, as we have pointed out in Chapter II,
[583] Article XI, no bride-price payment can be made from the time the pregnancy becomes visible until after the end of the period of seclusion.

843 To facilitate childbirth the previously mentioned concoc-
844 tion of various leaves mixed with kaolin (isaá) is continuously ap-
757 plied to the abdomen. Medical scarifications on the abdomen are also performed.

Finally, as the time of delivery approaches, special douches
[278] made from a concoction of the bark of the bofmbo tree (1) are

> 1. Certain douches, especially the one made of bofmbo, are also used as abortive agents.

administered. All these treatments are called beté bya bosánjá, that is, medicines (for the purpose) of an easy delivery.

Article III. Birth

944 1. Delivery

A woman remains with her husband for childbirth; she does not go home to her family. Only exceptionally does she give birth elsewhere -- for instance, if she has been sent home for one reason or another, or during a trip, while working in the fields, near a stream, or a spring, etc. Such sudden unexpected deliveries

844 are not too rare. (2)

2. Ease in delivery is called bosânjá; difficulty is called bonsombo.

A husband asks his mother-in-law to come and help her daughter. Other kinswomen of the husband or the wife do not refuse [482] their services either. Among them there is always one who is more expert in these matters and who acts as a midwife (mbótsi).

The delivery takes place in the banana grove behind the hut; there is light and air there. In the house it would be more difficult.

The husband cannot be present at this event. His presence would make it difficult and painful. The further away he is, the better. The prohibition is not rigid, however; if there is no one to help his wife (as in the case of an unexpected delivery in the forest, etc.), he will have no hesitation whatsoever in helping her with all the power and skill at his command.

To facilitate the arrival of the child, the midwife gives the wife a potion to drink "in order to make slippery" (boté wă [278] bosélí), and administers a douche containing bofmo bark.

If the pains continue for several days and all medication is 845 without results, it is assumed that some evil spell (liloka) is at work. To neutralize it the woman in labor is "blessed" (-saka). For that purpose her family and that of her husband each bring a stalk of the bokaakó plant (bosáánga). Two kinswomen, each with the stalk of her respective clan, squeeze out the sap with which they smear the woman's abdomen. After that the delivery takes place in a normal fashion.

845 The nkanga (doctor-magician) only intervenes when a woman 756 has already had several miscarriages or when all her children die. 769 If he is consulted he invariably attributes such misfortunes to the action of spirits of the deceased, who may be appeased by offerings and the promise that a manifestation of their will be heeded with respect to the naming of the child. Usually he adds that a few alimentary prohibitions must be observed until the child is weaned.

851 birth of a child involves a few prohibitions which affect the whole village and apply to the Batswá as well as the Baotó. They do not affect inhabitants of a portion of the village which is separated by a swamp from the group where the happy event has occurred. Those bound by the prohibitions may no longer go to "work" -- that is, to work in the fields, fetch food or firewood, build a hunting enclosure or a fishing weir, or work at the building or repair of a house. An infraction of this rule would result in the destruction of the fruit of all their labor: the fields would no longer produce, and no beast or fish would be caught. This deadly influence would [484] extend to all crops, etc. no matter whom they belong to. Nevertheless, there is nothing wrong in fetching firewood from the forest, harvesting manioc from a ripe field, or cutting the fruit of the palm.

Strictly speaking, these prohibitions touch only persons who have seen the newborn child. But since no one fails to go and admire it, all are subject to them. The prohibitions remain in ef- [184] fect until the umbilical cord is detached. Some tribes, however, have the more convenient custom of limiting its duration to the day of the child's birth.

2. The hygiene of mother and child

[844] The umbilical cord (lokóki) is cut near the middle. An in- 846 cision is made near the infant's navel. Each day a concoction of herbs is poured on the part of the cord that is still attached and white sand is put on it to make it dry more rapidly. When the end falls off, a powder made of scorched banana is applied to the wound.

In order to prevent the weakening of a woman's abdomen, it is bound with a belt made of bands of the dried bark of the banana tree (ekutú).

The assistants wash the mother and child. On the mother they place dried leaves or bark of the banana tree which have been carefully crumpled. They are put on like panties to catch the blood and are replaced by new ones whenever necessary. Nowadays pieces of cloth are often used; they are put on like a man's garment.